

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 2-17 are pending. Claim 2 has been amended. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

II. ALLOWABLE CLAIMS

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 2 and 3 include allowable subject matter. Claim 2 has been amended to be rewritten in independent form. Claim 3 depends from claim 2. It is respectfully submitted that claims 2 and 3 should now be allowed.

III. PERFECTION OF PRIORITY CLAIM

The present application claims the benefit of the priority date of German Patent Application No. 10014987.1-21, i.e., March 25, 2000. To perfect Applicants' priority claim, submitted herewith is a verified translation of German Patent Application 10014987.1-21.

IV. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 5-14, 16 and 17 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 5-14, 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pub. No. 20030045960 to Phillips et al. ("Phillips"). Respectfully, in view of Applicants' perfection of the priority claim, Phillips is not prior art to the present application. The present application is entitled to a priority date of at least March 25, 2000. Phillips earliest possible filing date is October 13, 2000, i.e., **after** Applicants' priority date. For at least this reason, the rejection of claims 5-14, 16 and 17 should be withdrawn.

V. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 4 AND 15 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103


Claims 4 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Phillips. As indicated above, in view of Applications' perfection of the priority claim, Phillips is not prior art to the present application. For at least this reason, the rejection of claims 4 and 15 should be withdrawn.

VI. CONCLUSION

Each of the issues raised by the Examiner has been addressed. It is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Passage to issuance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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